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YEDO AND TOKYO

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"Yedo" and "Tokyo" are two names of one and the same place and yet of quite different places. "Yedo" is the old name, and "Tokyo" is the new name, of the same place from the geographical point of view. The great metropolis of Japan is this year celebrating in various ways the fiftieth anniversary of its change of name from "Yedo," meaning only "Bay-door," to "Tokyo," meaning "Eastern Capital." While the mere change of name need not mean much in itself, the transformations that accompanied the change of name signified much in national development.

This may, therefore, be a good time to look back, fifty years or so and note what happened then of an epoch-making character. There were, in fact, four very important changes occurring in 1866, 1867, 1868. These were changes of Shogun, of Emperor, of capital, and of era; and they are all worthy of some little attention as changes of the history-making type.

In the first place, the young Shogun, Iyemochi, only eighteen years of age, died in 1866 and was succeeded in 1867 (January) by Keiki, born in the Mito family but adopted into the Hitotsubashi family. The new Shogun assumed the reins of government with much energy; but he realized that the great cause of civil strife in Japan was due to the fact that the administration proceeded from two centers and that the national power and influence were thus divided. He, therefore, in October of that year, resigned his position and restored the administrative power to the Emperor. All honor to Keiki, who had the vision to see and the wisdom to recognize, that he should be "the last of the Shoguns."

In the second place, there had occurred meanwhile (early in 1867) the death of the Emperor Osahito, post-

humously named Komei. Inasmuch as the administrative power was then still in the hands of the Shogun, and the Emperor was practically not much more than a figure-head, this change may seem to have been of slight importance. But it was what might not improperly be called a dispensation of Providence. The authority of the Shogun was waning and the influence of the Emperor was waxing. The old Emperor was an old-fashioned, ultra-conservative, "bigoted, barbarian-hating Mikado," who had been compelled against his will to sign the treaties with foreign powers and had been doing all in his power to make those treaties null and void. By-the-way, the superstitious conservatives attributed his death from small-pox to the fact that he had sanctioned those treaties! But the new Emperor, Mutsuhito, was a mere youth of fifteen, with a mind and heart open to the new ideas which his talented and progressive advisers were ready to recommend for adoption.

In the third place, in 1868, the city of Yedo became the "Eastern Capital" ("Tokyo"), while the city of Kyoto was renamed "Saikyo" ("Western Capital"). It may be added here, parenthetically, that the new name has not succeeded in supplanting the old name in the case of Kyoto, but has entirely superseded it in the case of Yedo. That is one peculiar point of interest in connection with all these vital changes; for it significantly illustrates the fact that the great reforms probably could not have been effected, at least not without the greatest difficulty, unless there had been a change of scene. Kyoto represented the unchangeable immovable, conservatism of the old and has not yet adopted even the new name, which would place it theoretically on a basis of equality with the former Yedo. But Kyoto seems to recognize that if is not even nominally a "capital" in the administrative sense; it is a capital only from the historical point of view.

In the fourth place, the name of the year-period was altered, so that 1868 became the first year of the "Era of Meiji," which very appropriately means literally "Enlightened Rule."

These four changes work definitely the distinction between the old and the new; and they are four signs of national evolution. The new Shogun, who was a man of liberal ideas, was willing and ready to unify the authority of the Empire by self-effacement. The new young Emperor came under the formative influence of the new reconstructive spirit. The new capital presented a new social and political atmosphere surcharged with the ozone of progress. The new era, in its very name, gave encouragement to the spirit of hopefulness and optimism; and it was prophetic of the illustrious rule of the new Emperor, upon whom the posthumous name of Meiji Tenno has been appropriately conferred. "Yedo," the old capital of the Shogun, who surrendered his power, became "Tokyo," the new capital of the new Emperor, ruling in a new era.